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SUBJECT: "BE PREPARED" -- WARSAW AND KRAKOW CONSULAR SECTIONS COMMIT TO YEAR-LONG CRISIS MANAGEMENT TRAINING

REF: (A) STATE 104542 (B) FSINFATC 02184

¶1. (SBU) Summary. The Consular Sections at U.S. Embassy Warsaw and U.S. Consulate General in Krakow launched their year-long commitment to crisis management training by holding a full-day crisis management exercise using air crash and H1N1 pandemic scenarios. American Citizen Service (ACS) Units in Warsaw and Krakow are now focusing on action items identified during the exercise, such as meeting Polish contacts in the key ministries responsible for crisis handling, revising the warden system, and updating the Emergency Action Plan and local duty books to reflect current Department guidance on pandemics. This was the first of several exercises planned for FY 2010. Future exercises are aimed at a wider audience, involving other sections and posts in the mission, and later possibly host government officials or other posts in the region End summary.

¶2. (SBU) On October 5, 2009, the Consular Sections in Warsaw and Krakow launched their year-long commitment to crisis management training by holding a full-day interactive crisis management exercise focused on an air crash scenario and the H1N1 pandemic. The 60+ participants included the entire Embassy Warsaw Consular Section, two Conoffs and two LES from Krakow, and the Consular Agent from Poznan. Charge Mike Tulley opened the session by explaining the role of the Emergency Action Committee (EAC) and the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), and citing examples of crises successfully solved due to efficient EAC action and EAP guidance. The Consul General (CG) then focused on consular roles and responsibilities in a crisis, including a review of pertinent sections of the Crisis Management Handbook and the Mission EAP.

¶3. (SBU) During the 90-minute H1N1 pandemic session (a combination of a slide presentation and a town hall discussion), the participants learned about the latest host country developments and the Department's guidance, and gained an in-depth look at tripwires and other planning factors for a pandemic. The afternoon training included an air-crash case study, followed by a 'hands-on' exercise with CA/OCS' participation. As the scenario developed, the participants, divided into five groups, answered calls from the Department and the 'concerned public', devised plans of action, kept logs, and entered data into the Crisis Task Force application. The groups also practiced information sharing and shift-work, gaining valuable insights into the numerous challenges of handling a crisis.

The session ended with an internal review, followed by a DVC debrief with Washington.

¶4. (SBU) The Warsaw and Krakow ACS Units are now focusing on action items identified during the exercise, such as updating American Citizen contact lists, identifying and meeting Polish contacts in the key government ministries and offices responsible for crisis handling, and updating the consular part of the EAP and local Duty Books to reflect the current Department guidance on pandemics. Taking advantage of his trip to Poznan on October 6-7, the CG met with Dariusz Dymek, Director of the Security and Crisis Management Department for the Wielkopolska region, which, according to Dymek, is a model of centralized crisis management now being implemented in

other Polish regions. Dymek told the CG that his Department is a 24-hour operation center that controls police, fire brigades, hospitals and other emergency services except for the airport authorities. During his visit to Poznan, the CG also met with Poznan Airport President Mariusz Wiatrowski, the head of the Military Police Col. Robert Stanislawski, Immigration Office Director Andrzej Kunicki, and Wielkopolska Regional Police Commander General Wojciech Olbrys. Conoffs are planning similar meetings in Warsaw and Krakow.

¶5. (SBU) ACS Warsaw has also revised its warden system to rely more on mobile phones and text messaging, the most popular means of communication in Poland. In response to ref A and in close cooperation with the Mission's Health Unit, Management and Economic Sections, and Community Liaison Office, on October 23 ACS Warsaw and Krakow updated their H1N1 notices posted on the Embassy and Consulate websites and sent a H1N1 warden message, thus testing the revised warden system. Together with the Economic Section, ACS Warsaw has also reached out to the Ministry of Health and the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate. The readout of a November 5 meeting with health officials will be covered by septel.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: The October 5 exercise was the first of several exercises planned for FY 2010. The next one - crisis preparedness for consular LES and wardens -- is scheduled for December 15 during FSI/CMT's visit to Warsaw (ref B). Future exercises are aimed at a wider audience, involving the EAC, other sections and posts in the mission, and later possibly host government officials or other posts in the region. End comment.

TULLEY